

# Breakfast in the Classroom



## The Basics:

### ★ How Does Breakfast in the Classroom Work?

Just as the name implies, students eat breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of the day or during morning break time. Reimbursable breakfasts are individually packaged in easy to grab bags. Breakfasts can be either hot or cold, depending on a school's facilities. Breakfast in the classroom can be offered three ways:

1. Students can stop by the cafeteria and pick up their breakfast in grab 'n go bags, along with milk and juice and then go to class.
2. Breakfast can be delivered to the classrooms on carts.
3. A student representative can go to the cafeteria, pick up the breakfasts for those students eating breakfast, and take it back to the class in a cart or wagon.

Little teaching time is lost, as breakfast only takes 10 to 15 minutes for the students to eat. Many teachers use this time to take attendance, collect homework, deliver announcements or read to the class. Many teachers feel this is a valuable use of time and that their classes are more productive when students have a healthy breakfast.

Students are responsible for clearing away their trash into trash bags provided by the cafeteria. Classroom representatives return the trash bag to the cafeteria or leave it in the hallway for the janitorial staff to collect.

### ★ Why Serve Breakfast in the Classroom?

Most importantly, when breakfast is served in the classroom, more students eat breakfast. Breakfast in the classroom is a great way to reach students who do not have time to eat before school, or who are not able to get to school in time for breakfast. In some cases, schools do not have a space that is available or large enough to serve breakfast. Classrooms are familiar to students and offer a comfortable environment for eating. Breakfast in the classroom is convenient and can be prepared quickly, with few staff.

### ★ When Does Breakfast in the Classroom Work Best?

Breakfast in the classroom works well in many different schools. Here are some qualities that make breakfast in the classroom successful:

- Students are in the same room at the start of each school day.
- Busses arrive just before classes begin.
- Teachers are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning.
- There is no space to serve breakfast.
- The cafeteria is centrally located.

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## Success Story:

**School:** Logan Middle School  
**District:** La Crosse School District  
**Contact:** Joni M Ralph, RD,  
 School Nutrition Programs Supervisor  
 608-789-7625  
 (jralph@sdla.k12.wi.us)  
 Principal: Troy Harcey  
 Grades served: 6, 7, 8  
 Enrollment: 554  
 Free/Reduced: 53%  
 Breakfast Participation: 45%  
 Lunch Participation: 72%

For over 7 years, the students at Logan Middle School have been eating breakfast in the classroom. It started when the food service staff noticed that many students were not coming into the cafeteria before school to eat breakfast. Some reasons were that the busses arrived just before classes started, students did not have time to eat before school, and the stigma of eating breakfast in the cafeteria. With a high percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price meals, the food service staff new there was a need. They just had to find a way to bring the food to the kids.

After discussing options with the principal and the teachers, they opted for breakfast in the classroom. Breakfast is offered on a weekly cycle, with two choices each day. A class list and menu are provided to each classroom and students sign up for whether or not they want breakfast and which choice they'd like. Breakfasts are usually cold, but hot entrées are offered three days a week. Kitchen staff prepare "breakfast totes" for

each classroom, that include the correct number of milk cartons, juice cups, and breakfast items. The staff deliver the totes to the classroom just before students arrive. As students arrive, they take their breakfast and the teacher or a student checks off their name. On days when hot items are served, a student goes to the cafeteria to collect the hot items and brings them back to the class. Totes and the class list are returned to the kitchen each morning.

Kitchen staff do much of the preparation for breakfast after lunch, finishing preparation in the morning. As a result, no staff were added when Logan started serving breakfast in the classroom. One of the biggest challenges says Joni Ralph, Food Service Director for La Crosse School District, is finding nutritious, portable breakfast items that kids like. Joni communicates with her vendors regularly to find the best possible choices for the program. She also suggests working with the principal, teachers, and Parent Teacher Organization, to help build support for the program.

By meeting the needs of the students, and bringing breakfast to them, participation more than doubled at Logan Middle School.